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View of Manhattan from Ellis Island - a Self Portrait

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ARTISTS STATEMENT:

The artwork, reproduced on the next page, was selected as part of an all-Iowa competitive show at the James and Meryl Hearst Center for the Arts in Cedar Falls, Iowa, and displayed from August 11 to October 6, 2002. The theme of the exhibit, "Who We Were Then: Who We Are Now," presents Iowa artists' interpretations of their identity, concerns, and emotions before and after the events of September 11, 2001.

The piece titled "View of Manhattan from Ellis Island – a Self Portrait" received the Director's Award (second prize). Jurors were the directors of the Dubuque Art Center, Dubuque, Iowa and Charles H. MacNider Museum, Mason City, Iowa.

The following statement describes my intent and meaning:

What I'm trying to convey to the viewer are a couple of thoughts. First, even though I (we) feel a midwest detachment from the physical reality of what happened on September 11, 2001, there is still personal grief and a sense of loss. This piece attempts to show this loss by altering a tourist style photograph of my daughter and myself taken on a family trip. Removing not only the World Trade Center towers but my daughter's image as well, transforms the photograph in a symbolic way. The photographic medium carried significant meaning and import reminiscent of the poignant displays of snapshots of missing persons.

Second, the dramatic alteration in the New York City skyline becomes a visual metaphor for the change between who we were then and who we are now. After these disconcerting events, life seems to go on and begins to seek a normal level; but since the tragedy was so profound, it is important that we should not forget the loss of persons and property. The ampersand alludes to ribbons that have been worn, out of respect to the victims.

David Versluis

View of Manhattan from
Ellis Island – a Self Portrait

Digital Print, Photo Montage
25 in. H. x 34 in. W.

11 September 2001



Now

&

Then